

MILLENNIAL STAR

THE MILLENNIAL STAR

VOLUME 118 No. 2

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF
LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

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The MILLENNIAL STAR is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, but welcomes contributions. Manuscripts are preferred typewritten and double-spaced, but are acceptable in legible handwriting.

Rates:
10s. per year
6s. per six months
Single copies 1s.

149 NIGHTINGALE LANE, BALHAM, LONDON, S.W.12
Telephone: BATtersea 4510

F. J. LAMB (PRINTERS) LTD., 173a Northcote Road, London, S.W.11

Anchor of Our Faith

IN MAY of 1840 the first issue of the *Millennial Star* was published. On the first page the editor, Parley P. Pratt, gave a prospectus. Among other things he wrote: "An ancient record has lately been discovered in America unfolding the history of that continent and its inhabitants . . . and containing much historical, prophetic, and doctrinal knowledge which is of utmost importance to the present age."

Ten years prior to this, and for well over 100 years since, the Book of Mormon through its "historical, prophetic and doctrinal" messages has exerted great influence in converting many souls to the truths of the Gospel of Christ. No other single means has been as effective. Many thousands have hailed it as the anchor of their faith—the tangible evidence that led them to a knowledge of the fullness of the Gospel.

What an inspirational compilation it would be if the many case stories of its converting power could be gathered into a printed volume. It would tell of the salesman who found a Book of Mormon in his hotel room and was converted to its truth, along with his family, years before he met a member of the Church. It would tell of the family at whose home a Book of Mormon was left in 1930, greeting missionaries who called in 1945 with a request for baptism. And of the minister who read it in preparation to more ably oppose it, but found its message too great to have originated with mortal man and accepted its truths and is still preaching its precepts and bearing witness of its divine origin.

Today it continues to be the most effective single medium in the organised proselyting plan of the church.

And this promise is the Lord's answer to those who would know of its divine origin:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost. Moroni 10: 4.

C.G.M.K.

Doctrinal Value

of the

BOOK OF MORMON

RONALD S. ELIASON

President of the Newcastle District

"**T**HOU fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? . . . And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time hence forth and forever." II Ne. 29:6, 9.

A prophecy fulfilled. The world today feels no need for another Bible, yet even the simplest fundamentals of the Gospel are corrupted beyond recognition. The concept of God, so simple and beautiful as taught by the Lord, is now an incomprehensible mystery to much of the world. So the Lord explains it, once again in the Book of Mormon, in Ether 3:14, 16. "Behold I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ . . . this body which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit, and even as I appear unto my people in the flesh". And in III Ne. 11: 15, "And it came to pass that the multitude went

forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet". Thus, in perfect harmony with the Bible the Book of Mormon reveals once again to mankind that Jesus Christ is a resurrected personage having an eternal, glorified body of flesh and bones and a spirit, and that we are literally in His image, and that it is truly life eternal to know the only true God. His pre-existence is also clearly designated having been prepared from the foundation of the world.

On every side the world is beset by fears and frustrations from the past, largely due to such things as original sin which cause men to lose faith and to believe in a pre-destinated damnation of inherited sins. And yet the scriptures testify in II Ne. 2:25-27 that "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that He may redeem the children of men from the fall." The atonement did away with original sin, and to deny that is to deny the Mission of the Saviour. Infants need no baptism. Mormon said, "Wherefore, my

beloved son, I know that it is *solemn mockery* before God that ye should baptize little children . . . and he that saith that little children need baptism denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the atonement of Him and the power of His redemption . . . For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and all they that are without law." Who could dispute such divine decrees!

And the mode of baptism. Has the world no need for further instructions from the Lord as they bicker over sprinkling, pouring, and immersing? The Bible is plain enough, but the Book of Mormon cannot be more precise as stated in III Ne. 11:25-26. "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye *immerse* them in the water and come forth again out of the water." What could be plainer? But then who has the authority of God to baptize? Can men form their own churches and their own baptisms without guidance and direction from the Lord?

Such an example is in the Book of Mormon in Mos. 21:33, "And it came to pass that king Limhi and many of his people were desirous to be baptized but there was none in the land that had authority from God. And Ammon declined doing this thing, considering himself an unworthy servant. Therefore, they did not at that time form themselves

into a church." The doctrine of authority was clearly defined in their minds, "That no man taketh this honour unto himself" and they obeyed it.

Perhaps most beautiful and significant of all Book of Mormon teachings pertain to the life after death in these inspiring words of Alma, 40:11-13, 22-26, "Now concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—these shall be cast out into outer darkness. Yea, this bringeth about the restoration of those things of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets. The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame. And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God." And thus the Book of Mormon speaks to clarify the will of the Lord.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine . . .

2 Timothy 3:16

The Book of Mormon

BY THOMAS STUART FERGUSON

Elder Thomas Stuart Ferguson is a prominent California attorney, and very active in Church affairs. In addition to his regular activities, he is an avid archaeologist, and specialises in Central American and Mexican archaeology. He has written upon the subject of the Book of Mormon for the Millennial Star, for which we express our appreciation.

IN 1937 a very prominent American said: "Of all the American religious books of the nineteenth century, it seems probable that the Book of Mormon was the most powerful. It reached perhaps only one per cent of the people of the United States, but it affected this one per cent as powerfully and lastingly that all the people of the United States have been affected, especially by its contribution to opening up one of our great frontiers.

At the present time such distinguished Americans as Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, Philo Farnsworth, inventor of television, George W. Romney, President of American Motors, and Ted Peterson, President of Standard Oil of California—all of the Mormon faith, will tell you that the reason the curious Book of Mormon has had such a powerful effect upon the

comparatively few who have studied and accepted it is because it is a true historical scripture, comparable in many ways to the Bible, but dealing with a particular zone of the ancient New World, and having a strange vitality to convince most readers that Jesus is the true and living Christ. The highlight of the Book of Mormon is its historical claim that Jesus visited the ancestors of the ancient Mayas and Aztecs in Central America shortly after His crucifixion.

A best seller—though maligned

Over two million copies of the Book of Mormon have been sold since the book was first published in 1830. This places it in the all-time best-seller class along with such books as *Gone with the Wind*, *Ben Hur*, *Ivanhoe*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Of course, the Bible is in a class by itself. The

Book of Mormon is presently selling at the rate of over 30,000 copies per year.

Copies of the Book of Mormon have been presented over the years to presidents, kings, queens, and prime ministers—and during World War II a young Army chaplain presented a copy to the Pope in Rome. The records of the Library of Congress show that President Lincoln had the Book of Mormon charged out during the troubled days of the Civil War and had it in his possession from November 18th, 1861, until July 29th, 1862.

Recent discoveries from excavations in Mexico and Guatemala and up-to-the-minute research in the oldest histories and traditions of Central America relate directly to Book of Mormon times and places. These developments are the first to constitute external evidence vindicating the Book of Mormon. Until today, the historical portions of the book appeared to be, on their face, utterly without support in history. These recent discoveries seem to revitalise the whole challenge presented by the Book of Mormon, giving it an immediacy. Great potential values for the entire free world may be at hand from it.

In 1953 the writer and John Sorensen, representing the New World Archaeological Foundation, successfully located a series of ancient cities in southernmost Mexico using the Book of Mormon as a guide. In April and May, 1955, the writer accompanied Edwin Shook, distinguished Carnegie Institution archaeologist, to some of these ancient communities. Shook confirmed our opinion—the sites date into Book of Mormon times—prior to 400 A.D. The New World Archaeological Foundation now has

one of the largest and best equipped Central American expeditions at work excavating some of these sites. The field director is a top-ranking American archaeologist, Dr. Heinrich Berlin, formerly of the Carnegie Institution staff. All of this is remarkably strange when it is recalled that we are talking about work in 1955-1956 regarding the most maligned, abused and slandered book in the entire literary world.

Here are some of the harsh terms which have been used in the past in referring to the Book of Mormon: *a work of ignorance and impudence; a diabolical farce; a silly fabrication; a book for which there is no proof; superstitious error and imposition; the most bungling piece of legerdemain; a fiction of hobgoblins and bugbears; a work of foolish pretensions to antiquity—a production beneath contempt, and utterly unworthy of the reception of a schoolboy; delusions; blasphemous pretensions; a work of ignorant fanatics; a fable; an ingenious fiction; an admixture of blackguardiam and nonsense that won't bear examination in any point; the book contains little else than wrong facts, wrong history, wrong morals, and wrong views on religion and life.* These epithets were selected from a much longer list taken from books, newspapers, and articles written between 1830, the year the Book of Mormon was published, and the present date. No other book has been the subject of so much venom and malice.

No evidence to support it in 1830

It is not at all surprising that the Book of Mormon was ridiculed by many critics until about 1950. When

the book came off the country press in the little town of Palmyra, New York, there was not a shred of evidence to sustain the details of its strange historical claims. There was not a single history book in the English or any other language that dealt with Mexico and Central America from 3,000 B.C. to A.D. 400—the places and times dealt with in the Book of Mormon. In 1841 William Harris, an outspoken critic, quite correctly said of it, “Probably in the history of the world, there is not to be found an instance of more cool impudence than the Book of Mormon coming forth, as has been shown, *without one shadow of evidence in its favour, either circumstantial or direct* . . . The Mormons

claim for it a rank and importance excelled by nothing that has gone before.”

Of course, the complete lack of data external of the Book of Mormon on the times and places dealt with in the book meant that there was no supporting evidence but it likewise meant there was no evidence to disprove the strange work. As late as 1950 a judgment was passed against the book in which it was said, “In it we are given . . . astonishing information to be found in no other historical records.”

In 1830 the science of archaeology was not even born and John Lloyd Stephens, the father of Mexican and Central American archaeology, had not yet made his famous



This bearded man was dug up in Guatemala. For decades the scientists have erroneously told the world that all natives of ancient America were Mongolians of the yellow race. They now stand discredited and the teachings of the Book of Mormon stand confirmed by the latest discoveries.

explorations. Although born in 1805, within a month of the birth of Joseph Smith, Stephens did not do his exploring until 1839 and his books did not appear until 1841 and 1843, more than eleven years after the Book of Mormon was published.

It is no wonder then, that the well informed sceptics of 1830 and of the years following questioned the book. Historical portions of the book were completely new and strange to the scholastic world, dealing with such a remote epoch that data by which to check it was non-existent. Had Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, given an advanced notice in 1830 regarding the details of television and atom bombs, he could not have been further ahead of his time or found a more complete intellectual vacuum on his subject.

A strange story

The historical portions of the Book of Mormon were, to the world into which they suddenly appeared, all at once strange, unfamiliar, foreign, odd, and to say the least—fantastic. The circumstances surrounding the production of the curious book were even more bizarre and seemingly ludicrous than the text itself. The book itself was allegedly a gold one, comprised of thin gold tablets about six inches wide and eight inches long, the stack of plates was six inches high, the plates being held together loose-leaf style by three gold rings each in the shape of a “D”. The record had been written in the fourth century—to be buried forthwith and to remain buried 1,400 years until the “due time of the Lord”—1830. The Mormons claim it was written for the benefit of the “latter-day”

world under express command and direction of the Lord. And this is not all that was extraordinary. An angel—a resurrected man—made delivery of the golden book to the country boy, Joseph Smith. Still another factor outside the normal experience or knowledge of man is involved in the translation of the ancient record. A sacred instrument of divine making, the *Urim and Thummim*, was furnished to Joseph Smith and with it the untrained boy-prophet was able to translate the long-lost language of the ancient colonisers of Middle America. A Book of Mormon historian had written within the text itself, “none other people knoweth our language; therefore He (the Lord) hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof.”

How extraordinary, how incredible, how fantastic could the claims be! Gold tablets hidden for 1,400 years—an angel sent from the Lord—a sacred instrument making it possible for an uneducated country boy of twenty-three to translate a lost and forgotten script of ancient Central America! And yet over a million substantial citizens of our twentieth-century world believe it all happened and that the book is true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God. And when all has been said, is not the Book of Mormon God the very type of deity that is found in both the Old and New Testaments—a personal God and a God of miracles?

To test the History is to Test Divine Revelation

The Book of Mormon now lends itself to scientific testing for the reason that it is full of technical claims regarding the ancients of Mexico and Central America and as

of 1955 we have some technical facts from scholastic sources concerning the lands and times of the Book of Mormon—facts that were not available in 1830 when the Book of Mormon was published. Before looking at the newly-discovered evidences, which are astounding, it is important that attention be called to the possible significance of testing the Book of Mormon. It is probably one of the most important projects ever undertaken. This is why.

When we test the Book of Mormon we test what purports to be a revelation from God. The entire Book of Mormon, though written by men of ancient America, was allegedly revealed and translated for the modern world by the power of God. If the book is true, it was revealed and translated through the power of God—as one great revelation. The entire book purports to be a revelation to modern man of very ancient and long-forgotten history. To test it is to test purported revelation. Since the entire book allegedly was revealed to the modern world by God, historical and technical parts as well as doctrinal portions, to test any part of it is to test whether it was truly revealed by God. If technical historical matters prove true, under test, that much was necessarily true revelation. That much data must necessarily have been revealed and translated with the power of God, since that is how Joseph Smith claimed to have obtained the information and since the information by which the test itself is made only now comes to light from scientific research of the present day. If sufficient technical historical claims of the Book of Mormon pass the test of 1955, it would follow that the angel, the

mysterious Urim and Thummin and God Himself exist and this would put Joseph Smith 125 years ahead of his time through revelation.

No other man, claiming to be/a prophet of God, has ever exposed himself to the exacting tests of science. No other alleged revelations, including those doctrinal portions of the Bible which claim to be revelations, can be tested by scientific means. Only doctrinal portions of the Bible purport to be revelations from God. Religious doctrines are abstract and cannot be checked against ancient physical evidence. The historical parts of the Bible have nothing to do with revelation. The historical sections lend themselves to scientific checking, but to prove them does not prove revelations because those portions were not revealed by God. They were simply recorded and translated by historians and linguists. The Book of Mormon is the only alleged revelation from God in the history of the world that can possibly be tested by scientific physical evidence.

Importance of the Book of Mormon

It is possible to construe the fourth-century Book of Mormon as having predicted the discovery of America, the unfolding of the world communist conspiracy, and the recent rise of the United States to world power.

The restoration of Israel was predicted in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the latter having specified that it would follow the coming forth of the American scripture. The prophecy has been fulfilled. Israel became an independent nation in 1948 when it was recognised by the United Nations. The

**Here is another
ancient citizen of
Central America,
The stocking cap
typifies the headgear
of ancient Israel.**



present-day gathering of Israel is, of course, a greater miracle than the escape of ancient Israel through the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses.

If the Book of Mormon is true, it is to play a great role in the long-range rebirth and destiny of Israel. It is yet to be a great factor in convincing the people of Israel, and the unbelieving world in general (including the millions behind the Iron Curtain), that Jesus is the Christ. Thus, it is to play a significant part in the present world conflict between the forces of freedom and the forces of darkness. The high purposes for which the golden book was compiled, preserved and miraculously translated are clearly stated within the book itself as follows: "Which [book] is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off

for ever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God." If the authenticity of the book is established beyond question by ever accumulating incontrovertible discoveries in Book of Mormon lands, it is likely that these great purposes will be achieved, and to the undoing of the foundations of godless, materialistic world communism.

As things now stand, it would seem that it is going to take such powerful and miraculous authenticated revelation of the reality of God to unite the free world and to save mankind from communism and materialism. God will become a historical fact—and from that point it will be much easier for men to make him the supreme fact of history. The Book of Mormon is a great challenge. It may well be that the response to it and to the ever-accumulating evidence sustaining it will result in a great inspired world



This carving was found recently in Central America, showing a face that is definitely that of a man of the white race. Notice the beard and features. When the Book of Mormon appeared in 1830, no such information was available, and the world laughed at the claim. Now it stands confirmed.

religious revival. As a miraculous but proven revelation from God, it would serve as a true basis on which to build a world religion. Such a world religion, encompassing the present Jews, Christians and heathens, would go far beyond present Judaism and present Christianity. It would take the world back to the true and living God of ancient Israel and bring to the true and living Christ—who are—curiously, one and the same personage, according to the Book of Mormon.

The need for just such a great revelation from God, and for such a great religious revival has been voiced by thinkers from Isaiah and Daniel of old to David Hume and Arnold Toynbee of modern times. The Book of Mormon may be of greatest importance to the world.

Recent Discoveries Sustain Book of Mormon

One of the historical claims of the Book of Mormon is that an early

white people of Mesopotamia, after participating in the building of the Tower of Babel (probably around 2800 B.C.), migrated to the New World, bringing with them a knowledge of farming, ceramics, textiles, metallurgy, writing and architecture. Book of Mormon lands were narrowly limited by seas, and included mountains, valleys, and plains, rivers and lakes, extensive forests, wet tropical or subtropical climate, abundant animal life, and rich mineral deposits. There were two main land divisions, a "land northward" and a "land southward", connected by an isthmus. These geographical requirements are fully met in Middle America. To that region allegedly came the colonisers bringing the culture of ancient Mesopotamia.

In 1950 the first English translation of the writings of the great Aztec historian, Ixtlilxochtl, was published. His works were unpublished and unknown in 1830,

although written about A.D. 1600. This learned Aztec chronicler states that the early people of Mexico had knowledge of the construction by their ancestors of a "very high tower," from which, after a confusion of language, they eventually migrated to Mexico. This suggests of course the Mesopotamian Tower of Babel, from which the early people of the Book of Mormon are claimed to have come to Mexico. Ixtlilxochitl also states that these first colonisers of Mexico were "giants," agreeing with the Book of Mormon references to the early colonisers of this region as "mighty men as to stature."

Turning to archæology, we find that archæologists have lately unearthed near Mexico City, the region prescribed, the ceramics and other remains of an advanced people which date back to 1500 B.C. according to radiocarbon evidence—that is into the very middle of the Book of Mormon era for the people in question. The newly-discovered, but still mysterious pre-classic culture of Mexico and Guatemala is encompassed by the time span of the Book of Mormon—3000 B.C. to A.D. 400. Time charts now on display in Mexico's National Museum confirm this. These excavations establish that these early people had knowledge of farming. They made good pottery and conventionalised figurines of baked clay which recall the fertility—goddess figurines of ancient Mesopotamia. They also had a knowledge of textiles, some of the figurines being representations of persons wearing turbans. Archæologists have not yet found evidence of metal-working, writing or architecture in this early period, but the digging has just begun. Nevertheless, it is seen that there is

already striking historical evidence and some archæological support of the Book of Mormon claim as to the identity of the first advanced people of the Middle American region.

The Book of Mormon further claims that a White people of Palestine (Israelites) also migrated in boats to the New World, arriving about 600 B.C., bringing with them the early-iron-age theocratic culture of the Israelites of that date, including Egyptian elements. They arrived in boats, settling in the "land southward", i.e. Guatemala, and later in southern Mexico. Their civilisation is declared to have flourished for nearly a thousand years, to about A.D. 385.

Bernardino de Sahagun (1499-1590), whose important history of ancient Mexico was lost and unknown for three hundred years, and which is just now being published in English, relates that the first settlers of Mexico after the "giants" were a people who came across the sea in boats. Indeed, one of the earliest native histories from Guatemala, the *Titulo de Los senores de Totonicapan* (1557), agrees with the Book of Mormon that the earliest of the ancient colonisers of that region were of the House of Israel.

That these ancient colonisers were from the Near East receives further support from the recent findings of archæologists. Dr. Alfred V. Kidder, dean of Central American scholars, has said of the "Pre-Classic" culture uncovered near Guatemala City and dating back to the period of this second or "Israelitish" civilisation of the Book of Mormon, that this culture was "approximately on a level with, and in general extraordinarily like, that of our own cultural ancestors

of the *ancient Near East, or Palestine.*"

Moreover, in recent years archaeologists have found in southern Mexico and Guatemala many representations of bearded men with high-bridged aquiline noses, the beards and noses suggesting white men as claimed in the Book of Mormon. One writer recently wrote, "*Maya sculpture showing bearded men in the attitude of conquerors, led Dr. George Vaillant to suggest that a bearded race ruled these lands before the ascendancy of the Mayas.*" The Mexican archaeologist, Covarrubias, has described one of the ancient bearded men from Olmec excavations in southern Mexico as having "surprisingly pronounced Semitic features." Harold

Gladwin, an archaeologist, devotes a major portion of his recent book, *Men Out of Asia*, to demonstrating that Mexico and Guatemala were colonised by sea from the Near East around 500 B.C. Thor Heyerdahl of *Kon Tiki* fame, in his immense new book explaining the ideas behind the famous voyage devotes over a hundred pages to the theme that a cultured white people colonised ancient Central America and Peru.

Positive evidence of the existence of the wheel in early Mexico, as claimed by the Book of Mormon, has recently been found at various sites in Mexico. The complex Tree of Life religious symbol, mentioned several times in the Book of Mormon, has been found by scientists in



The bearded man on this great stone monument of ancient Central America dates from Book of Mormon times. This monument is 16 feet high, and in the lower centre of the picture is seen an ancient bearded leader. This stone is still in location at LaVenta. The Book of Mormon announced to the world in 1830 that there were bearded white men from the Near East in ancient Central America. This monument was discovered in 1940 by Dr. Matthew Stirling of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

southern Mexico. It is identical in all major respects to the ancient Tree of Life representations in the Near Eastern homeland of the Book of Mormon peoples, and illustrates archæologically the references to this symbol in that record itself.

In 1953, the writer participated in explorations in Chiapas, Mexico, during which the Book of Mormon was used as a general guide with remarkable success. These explorations were conducted in co-operation with some of the foremost non-Mormon archæologists in America and Mexico. There are reasons for believing that excavations to be conducted at the discovered locations will result in additional startling finds. Excavations in Book of Mormon zones have just begun. The facts are not all in from archæology but the old cries of "fraud" that arose in Joseph Smith's day (and quite understandably) and which have been blindly continued to date must soon fade away.

In 1950 Hugh Nibley, Ph.D., a gifted linguist, in his book, *Lehi in the Desert*, presented evidence from the unimpeachable authorities establishing that many of the peculiar names in the Book of Mormon are of genuine ancient Near Eastern origin. *Nephi* is Egyptian, *Nahom* is Arabic, *Paanchi* is Egyptian.

William Foxwell Allbright, famous Bible-land linguist and professor of Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University, has pointed out that the curious Book of Mormon name, *Liahona*, might be a modification of the Classical Arabic *ila-hona*. These illustrations could be multiplied. The names are genuine but many were completely beyond the most learned linguists of

1830—a *fortiori* beyond the humble Joseph Smith.

In 1953 George F. Carter of the School of Geography at Johns Hopkins University made this revolutionary statement: "The held doctrine of the absolute separation of Old World and New World agriculture is no longer tenable." The scholars are just now approaching the Book of Mormon claims as to the transpacific transfer of plants.

Perhaps the most remarkable evidence yet discovered sustaining the Book of Mormon comes from the writings of the Aztec prince already mentioned. He left a very accurate description of just such a book, written just when the Book of Mormon was written—the fourth century of our Christian era. He calls it a "Divine Book". The compiler of the sacred book of fourth-century Mexico, *Hueman*, plays a role identical to that of Mormon, fourth century compiler of the Book of Mormon. Confirmation that such a book truly was written comes also from the sacred book of Guatemala, the *Popol Vuh*. The latter refers to what may well have been the Book of Mormon. It states that the original book "cannot be seen any more, in which was clearly seen the coming from the other side of the sea and the narration of our obscurity, and our life was clearly seen. *The original book, written long ago, existed, but its sight is hidden to the searcher and to the thinker.*"

The Book of Mormon narrates the coming from the other side of the sea—was written long ago—and remained hidden for 1,400 years—from A.D. 421 until published in 1830, according to the Mormon position.

The discovery in Mexico or Central America of an ancient writing in one of the early scripts of the Near East and actually mentioning a people, city, person or event of the Book of Mormon, would of course constitute final and complete vindication of the American prophet, Joseph Smith. It would have the greatest significance and value to the free world. Such a discovery must now be considered well within the bounds of possibility. It would involve the seemingly miraculous and supernatural—but so did the discovery of television and atomic power. Most anything can happen in this marvellous age. Already a great carved stone has been found portraying a scene described in the

Book of Mormon and nowhere else in all the world. It is a representation of Lehi's dream of a "tree of life" near which ran a stream of water, paralleled by a path and a rod. Thirteen unique elements mentioned in the Book of Mormon are all found on the great stone.

The Book of Mormon is the world's strangest book. It is the only alleged revelation from God in the history of the world that can possibly be tested by scientific means. It may be of great potential importance to the world. Recent historical and archæological discoveries suggest that it very well may pass the tests to which it is being put.

A Question Answered

In reply to a question asked by a member of the Church here in the British Mission, President Clifton G. M. Kerr wrote this letter. We feel that it is a pertinent topic, and have printed President Kerr's reply.

Dear Brother,

Your question is of such nature that prayerful wisdom is needed to give an adequate answer. First, let me state the question as I would read it from your letter: "Is it breaking the commandments of God (i.e. Word of Wisdom) to take into your body, when ill, medicine prescribed by a qualified physician which contain ingredients such as alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, etc."

As the knowledge of the effects of drugs on the human body developed they have been used in the treatment of bodily ills, and today more than ever before seem to be a necessary part of the physician's art. Many drugs are specific cures in themselves, but the ones referred to above may or may not be the actual healing agent. Rather they may

sometimes be prescribed for the purpose of aiding the healing process naturally inherent in our bodies. They may have the effect of stimulating the nervous system, or depressing it. They may serve to relieve pain and discomfort or for the artificial relaxation of the nerves and muscles in order that nature's healing processes might be more freely operative. Drugs thus used might be vegetable or mineral, natural or synthetic, but serving the same general purpose.

When we call a physician to attend us we express some degree of confidence in his ability to help us. I presume we would be free to accept or reject his methods, or to counsel with him as to more acceptable or desirable methods. It might also be assumed that a qualified physician would not prescribe a drug to be used to the extent of physical damage, growing out of too large a dosage or to extend over too long a period of time, and thus risking a patients becoming dependent upon its use for his well being.

Now, dear brother, I do not believe the Word of Wisdom was intended to cover the medicinal use of any drugs that might be in liquor, tobacco, tea or coffee, but rather at what the Lord so well knew was coming to pass, namely, the habitual daily use of these things as though they were necessary food and drink. Out of this latter practice has come a world of unwitting drug addicts which condition the Word of Wisdom was intended to warn us against.

So, I do not think Our Heavenly Father would condemn us if on doctor's orders we have prescribed for us some drug contained in the items forbidden in the Word of Wisdom. However, it is doubtful that any of them would be very helpful in treating normal everyday ailments, or that we would be endangering our health if we refused to take them. So wisdom and freedom of choice are essential in applying the principles of the Word of Wisdom in the practical matter of a doctor's prescription.

By this time you will gather that I have avoided a categorical yes or no answer to your question. This has been purposeful in that I cannot feel that it yields itself to such simplificaion.

I trust this will help you in your class discussion to have a meeting of the minds on this problem.

May I offer my encouragement in your efforts to understand the true meaning of all the revealed word of God.

Sincerely yours,

CLIFTON G. M. KERR,
Mission President.

The Book of Mormon

RONALD Q. FEENEY

President of the

TO THE people of the world, we as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints testify that God has restored His church to the earth in our day. God has given us an infallible witness of this fact. This witness is the Book of Mormon. There are men in the world who oppose the church because of a lack of understanding and knowledge. They will wrest with the scriptures and render personal interpretations of the Holy Bible which suit their own traditions and satisfy their own conscience, but the Book of Mormon stands as a witness both for itself and for the fact that the Lord has spoken and raised up a prophet in this dispensation. Anyone who accepts the responsibility of a prayerful and unselfish investigation of the Book of Mormon will receive a burning testimony of the truth of this claim, and yet the majority will shirk this responsibility. We can raise the percentage of the faithful if we can learn to use the Book of Mormon as a missionary.

There are two things to consider in using the Book of Mormon effectively. The first is your own attitude toward, and love for, the Book, and second is a consideration of the characteristics of the Book itself. To illustrate the first:

recently, at one of the Christmas-time multiple district missionary conferences, the missionaries were taken on a tour of an old house and estate which dated back to the fifteenth century. Our guide, who lived at the house had a very colourful personality, and he so loved the house and everything that made it unique, that he just seemed to radiate with every word of explanation. The natural result was that we were all fascinated and each of us lived the story of the old house as he told it. This illustration can be applied. The more you know the Book of Mormon, the more you will love it, and the more you love the Book of Mormon, the more your sincere enthusiasm and love will cause the Book and its glorious principles to live in the hearts of others.

This brings us to our second point. Truly, enthusiasm brings interest, but most of the interest must be instilled through the characteristics of the Book of Mormon itself, or this interest will be short lived. The fascination we felt for the old house will be only temporary if we leave it at that. It would take us to go into the architecture, history, and circumstances of its origin thoroughly in order for our appreciation to be perfect in that regard. With this application to the Book

on as a Missionary

FREDERICKSON

the Irish District

of Mormon in mind, let us consider some of the means of creating interest in the Book with the Book itself.

There are four approaches to the Book of Mormon, among others, which are outstanding. They deal with (1) Archæology; (2) The House of Israel; (3) Philosophy and moral teachings, and (4) The Doctrine of Christ. Any or a combination of these aspects can be stressed depending on the person in whom we are trying to instill an interest.

The recent findings of archæology have proved to be true, claims in the Book of Mormon which were discredited when the Book was first published. This is a direct evidence of its divine origin. To have a specific knowledge of certain of these archæological facts is to have at your fingertips a powerful means of creating a faith in the Book of Mormon for many people. A study of these facts would be well rewarded.

A consideration of the twelve tribes of Israel is also a powerful approach to the Book of Mormon. Jesus said, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24). He also told the Jews, "... other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice . . ." (John 10:

16). The Jews are of the tribe of Judah. Therefore, since Christ was sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," His "other sheep" are the other of the twelve tribes of Israel, which tribes, according to the Bible were led out of the Holy Land. Those tribes also received the personal ministrations of the Saviour. We can see the inspiring fulfillment of his words when he appeared to the Nephites who were of the tribe of Joseph (on the western hemisphere) and said, "... ye are they of whom I said, other sheep I have which are not of this fold . . ." (3 Nephi 15: 21-24). Christ also went personally to the rest of the house of Israel, as he had promised (3 Nephi 16: 1-3; 17: 4). Compare these passages with the second book of Nephi, chapter twenty-nine, where Nephi tells us that the time will come when the Jews, the Nephites, and the lost tribes of Israel will have the records of one another, and the complete picture of the ministry of Jesus Christ will become a thrilling realization and will impress any honest person with the fact that the Book of Mormon is of great significance.

Another very appealing aspect of the Book of Mormon is its philosophy and moral teachings. No sincere individual could read King Benjamin's address (Mosiah 2, 3,

and 4) on service to God and fellow man, or Alma's discourse on faith (Alma 32), or Lehi's dream of the Rod of Iron and the Tree of Life (1 Nephi 8), and many other beautiful and wisdom-filled passages, without being deeply impressed that the Book of Mormon is of God.

The doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as set forth in the Book of Mormon is complete and perfect. It is in harmony with the Bible and entirely consistent with itself. To become familiar with the Fall of Adam, the Atonement of the Saviour, Repentance and Baptism, the Resurrection, the Judgment, and the plan of Salvation as taught in the Book of Mormon is a necessary requirement in order for us to be able to use the Book as a missionary.

These aspects of the Book of Mormon have been pointed out for

a purpose. It is not enough for us merely to go through the motion of getting a book into the hands of our friends and associates outside the Church. We must conscientiously and with love point out the purposes and the enriching characteristics of the Book in order to help give their budding testimony a firm foundation. Let us continually prepare ourselves to do this, always remembering to teach and apply the beautiful promise in the last chapter of this sacred record :

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things ” (Moroni 10: 4-5).

Still the Greatest Missionary

By **ELDER JOHN L. HARMER**

“**A**ND when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that you would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true . . .” Thus reads the familiar promise of Moroni 10: 4. Sometimes the members of the church and even missionaries are too prone to take this rich promise for granted, and we lose sight of the fact that the Book of Mormon is still the greatest missionary the Church has today. The power of God within the record that brought Brigham Young into the Church is still there, and today is still bringing the honest in

heart to a knowledge of the restoration. One such example is that of Brother and Sister Jack Hooper, of Swansea, Wales.

Before being contacted by the Elders, Brother and Sister Hooper had not been active in any religious organisation. They were not able to find in any of the doctrines of popular Christianity the satisfaction that they desired. One evening in July of 1955, two Elders knocked on their door and introduced them to the Book of Mormon. Brother Hooper accepted the book mostly because of an interest in the history of ancient civilisations. Soon, however, the spiritual power of the record came to their attention, and they accepted the challenge of Moroni to read the record sincerely, and to pray about it. Having done so they soon came to have a deep and abiding knowledge of its truthfulness; so much so that they had a testimony of the restoration long before the Elders were ever able to tell them the complete story of Joseph Smith and the bringing back to the earth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Brother Hooper said, "The Book of Mormon and the gospel as it is restored has brought into our lives a real meaning of the words, 'Our Eternal Father, and His Son Jesus Christ'. To understand our relationship to our God, to have a testimony of Jesus Christ, and to have gained such a richness and fullness of life as the gospel has brought us has been a blessing we shall never be able to repay."

Sister Hooper has echoed the words of her husband with this testimony. "Our lives have taken such a complete change, that only something with the power of God behind it could have accomplished what has taken place. We never prayed together before in our lives, nor have we found such a rich meaning and purpose in life. Our happiness and joy have been multiplied so much, that it will take a great deal to live worthy of it all." The humility and gratitude of this young convert family could also be a great lesson for so many who have had the gospel given to them as an inheritance, and have never had to find out why it is true.

The Hoopers, with their daughters, Lorna, aged six, and Susan, aged four, are the first members of the church in Swansea. The missionaries have just returned here after some fifty years absence, to re-establish another branch of the church. With such people as the Hoopers to work with, and with a missionary as powerful as the Book of Mormon, the Elders are certain that their work shall be successful.

For behold, this is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized into repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive.

Mosiah 26:22

To the Reader of The Book of Mormon

by Professor Eldin Ricks

Elder Eldin Ricks is a professor of religion at Brigham Young University, and at present is completing advanced study in Pennsylvania. Professor Ricks, as an Army chaplain in World War II presented a copy of the Book of Mormon to the Pope. This article comes from Elder Rick's fine book, *The Book of Mormon Commentary, Vol. 1*, and is reproduced with the author's kind permission.

THE Book of Mormon is a God-given new witness for Christ to the present generation. It provides new evidence that the man Jesus, who was publicly executed nineteen hundred years ago at Jerusalem, was the Lord come down to earth, Emmanuel, the Saviour of the world. Indeed, it constitutes the most significant new evidence for the truth of the Bible and the divinity of Christ that has come to the world since the death of the ancient apostles.

It is readily apparent that there is need for such new evidence when it is noted (1) that today, after nineteen hundred years, the so-called Christian nations embrace only one-third of the world's population; (2) that fifty per cent of this one-third attend no church; (3) and that the Jews are not converted to Jesus as the Christ—their Jehovah.

A prominent nineteenth century Protestant churchman states: "*Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing fifty words which were*

certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century. If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like He was, it would not matter that its colours were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have a once a solitary place amid the treasures of art."

The Book of Mormon is offered to the world as just such a "find", the actual translation of an ancient record. But instead of fifty words spoken by Jesus (through prophets and in person), it contains many thousand; and instead of being discovered by an explorer in Egypt it was found by a young man in western New York, to whom its hiding place was divinely revealed.

Since the publication of this remarkable record in 1830, tens of thousands of missionaries have carried it to the far corners of the civilised world, announcing it to be a new revelation from God; and

nearly two million people, living and dead, have accepted the truth of that claim. This fact, however, does not prove the book to be true. The discovery of its truth is made by each reader who studies it in harmony with "*the inspiration of the Almighty (that) giveth . . . understanding.*" It is the goal of the book's adherents that in time every living soul shall have the chance of forming his own prayerful and studied conclusions as to its divinity.

The World on Trial

In a larger sense, however, the *Book of Mormon is not on trial; the world is.* The ancient abridger and compiler, Mormon, who lived in the fourth century A.D., affirmed this challenging thought when he said the Lord revealed to him that in the day of its coming forth it would serve as a means of testing the faith of His people. It is a test by virtue of the fact that from age to age they who are "his sheep hear his voice" and recognise it, while they who are spiritually asleep reject it and, in so doing, are rejected of Him. This is the doctrine of the New Testament. And because His voice speaks forth anew to the modern world through the Book of Mormon, this scripture of ancient America keenly tests the spiritual perception and quality of faith of the present generation.

A Day of Warning and Preparation

There is grave urgency in this matter of testing, as also urgency in its warnings to all men to repent and come unto Christ. Joseph Smith, who translated the work from ancient engravings on metal plates, declared that the heavenly messenger who committed them to his custody informed him "*of great judgments which were coming upon*

the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation". He said he was also told "*that the preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence and that the time was at hand for the Gospel in all its fullness to be preached in power unto all nations that a people might be prepared for the Millennial reign*".

Into a world distraught with the tribulations of prophecy, the Book of Mormon goes forth to test and to ferret out Christ's "sheep" today, those who possess teachable hearts and living faith and whose ears are attuned to "hear his voice" and in hearing rejoice. And then it aims to help these faithful ones prepare for the triumphant return of Jesus Christ, whose coming will be as a consuming fire to every corruptible, wicked, and unholy thing. Of this event the Apostle Peter solemnly prophesied, "*But the day of Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*". This time of cleansing, which only the most righteous of men will be able to endure, will herald the ushering in of a millenium of felicity and peace—the Thousand Years of Biblical prophecy.

Men of all churches and creeds should listen and take heed. No one can afford to remain in ignorance of this great message. Every person the world over should read the volume while the opportunity lasts. *Your opportunity is now.* Many will not have another chance, because the labourers are few and the

field of labour vast. Besides, the Lord has made known that the hour of His coming is "near, even at the doors" and has designated this "a day of warning, and not a day of many words". Then after learning of its truth, it is every man's duty and privilege to obey its precepts. Such compliance is but a necessary first step in the great work of individual and collective preparation for the appearing of our Lord and Saviour.

For these reasons the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is regarded by many as the most significant religious event since the time of Christ, an event no less important to the world than the warning message of Noah to the generation before the flood or the preparatory work of John the Baptist before Christ's earthly ministry.

We are obliged to observe in passing that it is one of the amazing phenomena of our age that despite the numerous symbols of impending destruction—guided missiles, hydrogen bombs, biological warfare—such as hover over our generation like a pall, the human family today remains largely unmoved by and uninterested in claims to warnings and counsellings of God. It is doubtful whether the ill-fated people of Noah's day, who had nothing like these emblems of disaster to warn them, were more sceptical of things prophetic and divine or less inclined to bow down in true humility and repentance that is the world of our day. Fittingly, Jesus described the condition of unbelief that would exist in the last days when he asked, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

A Work of History

And yet the Book of Mormon is not primarily a prophecy of our

times nor of events to transpire beyond our times. It is, first of all, an account of God's dealings with a branch of Israel in early America, as compiled by a prophet named Mormon in the fourth century A.D. It records the migration of a Hebrew colony to the Western World soon after 600 B.C. and of two nations that emerged from them and the final overthrow of one of these nations in the year A.D. 385. This is the main account. Then attached to it and forming one of its divisions is the Book of Ether, an abbreviated history of a yet earlier people, the Jaredites, who left the Middle East and arrived in America shortly after the fall of the Tower of Babel.

A Work of Scripture

Notwithstanding the historical aspects of the work, we would emphasise that the Book of Mormon is not to be read as a text-book of history. It is a history, but it is more than that. *It is a scriptural document containing actual words of Christ.* As the Prophet Nephi wrote in the sacred record shortly before his death, "*And now . . . all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good*".

The high point of the Book of Mormon, in fact, is the record of a personal visitation of the Saviour to ancient America after His resurrection, an event that doubtless forms the basis of the numerous "fair god" traditions of certain primitive tribal groups of the Western Hemisphere.

A Test of Its Truth

And now a special word to those who read the Book of Mormon for the first time: This work is probably quite as unusual in our age as was the testimony of the Apostle Paul in the Greek and Roman world nineteen centuries ago. Paul testified that he had been visited by the resurrected Lord, but most men scoffed and called him deluded or worse. Only the wise weighed carefully what he said. Over the years since Paul's day nearly every great invention or discovery has been ignored or resisted when first announced. In almost every age men have killed their living prophets and erected monuments to dead ones. Human tendencies have changed but little in this respect. It is still easier to reject new ideas than to give them thoughtful attention and a patient hearing. The wise man, though, does not fall into this, humanity's major intellectual pitfall. He does not pass judgment until all the evidence is in and meanwhile seeks earnestly to obtain all the evidence.

In certain areas, too, scholarly investigation is inadequate. The Apostle James, without belittling the research worker, pointed out another approach to truth. The announcement of this other method forms one of the finest contributions of the Bible to humanity's search for ultimate certainty. It is valuable because it reveals an avenue to truth that is open to everybody, not just to scholars, who constitute but a

small fraction of God's children. It is at once the oldest and best of methods and yet for some strange reason, the most neglected. Probably the explanation for this neglect is that it is so hard for the beginner. Good men who work at it, though, find that it becomes easier with practice. This method is prayer. James said of it, "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed*".

The last writer of the Book of Mormon urged future readers to apply such a test of the spirit when he said, "*And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.*"

It is the testimony of thousands and tens of thousands that whosoever will read the Book of Mormon thoughtfully and prayerfully and with an open mind will have opened to his understanding a thrilling awareness of a "marvellous work and a wonder" that God has wrought for the benefit of His children in this generation.

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions.

Ezekiel 37:16

Branch and District Activities

Birmingham

Birmingham Branch has had a change in their presidency, the setting apart taking place on November 20, 1955. The new president is Elder John Kitsell, and his two counsellors are Elder Horace James Mawle and Donald Jeavons. May we take this opportunity to wish the new branch presidency great success.

On December 3rd a party was held in the *Northampton Branch*. About 70 saints and friends were in attendance, and a fine time was had by all. The programme included games, a short and amusing play given by the local members, and a good film show, given by friends of the branch. The Relief Society handled the refreshments.

On December 24th members and friends gathered together for a Christmas Eve party. The group was later enlarged by the coming of some of the district missionaries. Games were played, and carols were sung, much to the enjoyment of all concerned. Christmas afternoon, a service was held in the Church.

Over 40 members and friends attended the Christmas party held by the *Nuneaton Branch* on Thursday, December 22nd. Between dances, members and friends provided entertainment, and the Relief Society took care of the refreshments. The sisters also had a "bring and buy" stall, the proceeds of

which were donated to the branch building fund. A very pleasant time was had by all.

Bristol

The *Bristol Branch*, as a branch, has made a New Year's resolution to exceed the goals set in 1955. The priesthood meetings are always well attended, there is a good spirit of co-operation among the members. The Relief Society has a fine spirit of teamwork, and are enjoying their work. The prospects look good for 1956. Two of the outstanding events of 1955 were the excellent Rose Ball and the winning of the MIA Shield at the MIA Festival in Plymouth.

Bournemouth Branch has had an active time. On December 10th the Relief Society held a Sale of Work, and Jumble Sale, which was quite a success. The highlight was the very clever handiwork of Sister A. B. Crumpler. On the 19th of December a Christmas party was held in the Fellowship Hall for all Sunday School children and Primary children. Gifts were presented to each child at the conclusion of the party.

On New Year's Eve the *Cheltenham Branch* held their annual Christmas party. Each member took a part in the evening's activity and it proved to be a lovely evening for all.

Also, on January 7th, the Primary children held their Christmas party. Each of the large number of child-

ren in attendance received a gift from the Christmas tree, and prizes were awarded for Sunday School attendance (the prizes were a Bible and a copy of the Book of Mormon).

The *Weston-Super-Mare Branch* welcomes Brother and Sister Panayiotou and son Stephen back from Cyprus. On December 15th the Relief Society and Primary held a Christmas party for 25 children. A good time was had by all. Correction to the meeting times: Priesthood, 11.0 a.m.; Sunday School, 2.30 p.m.; Sacrament Meeting, 6.30 p.m. All meetings are held at the Chapel.

Hull

On Friday, December 6th, the *Grimsby Branch* held a social and farewell party for Elder Kenneth G. Blair. Elder Blair laboured in the Hull District for his entire mission, and for 15 months in Grimsby. A wonderful time was had by all who attended. Elder Blair was presented with a gift, a leather shoe set, and his initials were engraved in it in gold by Mr. W. E. Trumble. Sister Marjorie Jenner and Mrs. Violet Sharp were in charge of refreshments. The Sunday School Christmas party was also a great success, the highlight being Brother Malcolm King and his marionette show. Sister Mavis Oxely and her counsellors were in charge of the party, which had an attendance of 35 children.

The Relief Society sisters of the *Hull Branch* held their annual bazaar on December 3rd, and many useful items were for sale. The sisters from Bilton Grange also contributed. It was a very successful evening. On December 17th a pantomime entitled "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" was presented by

the branch, under the direction of Sister Thistleton and Sister P. Stevens. Sister Rose and Sister Tewster were the principals, and did very well. The money was given to the branch building fund. The first annual Budget Banquet was held on December 31st, and was very successful. The food was prepared by Brother Spurr, and the cake, decorated by Sister Bennett's husband, was cut by President Aubrey.

The *Scarborough Branch* had a Christmas party on December 21st and many members and their friends attended. Three fine plays were presented, and much enjoyed. Brother and Sister Crossby decorated the room, and the plays were under the direction of Brother Coyne. It was a good evening.

On December 30th the *York Branch* held a successful Christmas party, and 34 children attended. Refreshments were handled by the Relief Society, and were very good. The children presented an excellent Nativity play. York Branch members are working together cleaning and preparing their building.

Irish

The *Belfast Branch* MIA held a social, conducted by Brother John Stewart and Sister Pat Turner. There was a wonderful turn-out, and one of the high spots of the evening was a vocal duet by Elders Frederickson and Christensen. The party was a big success. The Primary and Sunday School each had a Christmas party, and both enjoyed a good attendance. Primary Mother, Sister Ray Nicholls and Sister Sally Cully conducted the two parties. A Christmas Eve carolling party led by President R. Q. Frederickson ended up at Sister Eleanor Turner's home, and

the group enjoyed hot chocolate and meat pies.

London

A social for the youngsters was held by the *Catford Branch* on January 7th. About 20 children and adults were present at the party, which was organised by Brother Osborne. Refreshments were arranged by the Relief Society.

Newchapel Branch has had a full schedule, starting with the winning of the London District Drama Festival on December 10th at the South London Branch. On December 19th the prize-winning play was taken to the Old Ladies' Home at Dippen Hall and presented. The ladies greatly enjoyed the evening, especially the group carol singing. The Branch Christmas party was held on the 20th of December in the Newchapel House. There was a warm feeling of friendship prevailing, and the comedy skits were enjoyed by all.

Manchester

The Manchester District Headquarters at Wythenshawe was the locale for a ball sponsored by the Third Quorum of Elders, under the direction of Presidents Woodruff (Manchester), and Cubbin (Liverpool) on the 10th of December. About 100 people attended, over 65 of them from Liverpool. A professional band played, and the dance was a rousing success.

Ashton-Hyde Branch had the Primary and Sunday School Christmas party on the 23rd of December, and about 28 people attended. Brother Entwistle entertained with his harmonica. Brother Stanley Dickinson, who emigrated to Salt Lake City three years ago, paid a visit to the branch over Christmas,

and related many interesting events about his travels.

Bury Branch held their seasonal party on December 23rd, and the children were greatly entertained. On the 4th of December Joan Lomas, Marion Urch and Oliver and Michael Dewsnup were presented with copies of "The Pearl of Great Price", for 100 per cent attendance at Sunday School for 1955. Congratulations on a fine record! On January 6th the MIA went to the Theatre Royal, under the direction of Sister Joyce Heywood.

The *Wythenshawe Branch* MIA had a monthly "night out", a night at the theatre, planned by Brother Mazie. Many valuable points were picked up by observing professionals at work, and the drama group under Brother Harold Crookell particularly took notice.

Newcastle

The *Darlington Branch* Christmas party was held on December 20th, with refreshments served by the Relief Society. About 35 attended. Also, Sister Leonora M. Edwards was honourably released as President of the Relief Society at the November Conjoint Meeting. Sister Jane Hancock was sustained as the new president.

The *Sunderland Branch* has been very active, speaking to many prominent groups on the Gospel. Among those visited were the Ebenezer Church, the Toc H Club, the General Havelock Lodge of the Presbyterian Church and the Redby "Over Sixties" Club. Congratulations to you, Sunderland, on your very active schedule. On December 29th there was a grand party, put on for the sisters by the fathers and sons, and it was a terrific success.

The Christmas parties were also greatly enjoyed.

Norwich

Lowestoft Branch Sunday School, headed by Brother Frank Coleby, had a Christmas party on December 28th. On January 3rd the Branch presidency sponsored a social and 24 members enjoyed a wholesome evening. Sister Ivy Upson gave a good reading.

Norwich Branch issued out the old year with a party that was sponsored by the Priesthood. The Relief Society handled the eatables. It was a most enjoyable occasion.

The *Southend Branch* Relief Society Rummage Sale on November 12th netted £12, and was under the direction of Sister Cohn. More of such sales are contemplated.

Nottingham

On December 5th a welfare social was held at the home of Brother and Sister Bala, of the *Derby Branch*. Refreshments were in the form of a buffet supper. The sum of 25s. was collected at a social held on December 17th, and was given to the Sunday School. Brothers Gordon Sherlock and Dennis Marson headed the function. The Derby Primary party was held on December 21st, and Sister Burrows played Father Christmas very ably. The children were very pleased.

A New Year's Eve dance was held by the *Leicester Branch*, and was well attended. Sister Doreen Green decorated the hall beautifully, with the help of branch branch members.

The *Nottingham Branch* Primary parties on December 14th were attended by 135 children. They were very successful, and were organised by Sisters Hilda Storer and Muriel Cuthbert. Christmas carol-

ling was much in evidence, and greatly enjoyed. Finally, the New Year was ushered in with a branch social on the Eve, and it was a joyful occasion with additional interest provided by a fancy dress parade. It was won by Brother Tom Heszeltine. Christmas activity was not confined to carols and games, however, for various projects carried out by the Priesthood and Relief Society brought £15 to the building fund.

Scotland

The Sunday School and Primary of the *Aberdeen Branch* combined to give the children a Christmas party on the 24th of December. The children had a lovely time and Santa came with presents for all. The MIA had a party for the grown-ups on December 20th, and the highlight was a buffet supper. The Aberdeen Branch extends a greeting to all the branches in the mission.

Wales

The Christmas bazaar of the *Cardiff Branch* was well attended, over 100 people were there. There were the regular festivities, and a fine programme. The MIA went caroling to the Ely Children's Home, and the children were very appreciative. A fine gesture, Cardiff.

Births and Blessings

Cooper. The infant son of Brother and Sister Cooper was blessed on November 6th by Brother Charles Sharp. He was given the name of William Bradford Cooper. The family are members of the Norwich Branch.

Hancock. Olwen Hancock, daughter of President and Sister A. P. Hancock, was blessed by her father on September 4th. They are members of the Darlington Branch.

Jenkinson. A son was born to Brother and Sister Jenkinson of the Wythenshawe Branch on December 18th. He was blessed on January 1st by Brother Cecil Kearns, and given the name of Richard.

Engagements

Blackham - Joseph. Sister Sheila Blackham became engaged to Brother John Joseph on November 12th. Both are of Birmingham Branch.

Popham - McCracken. Sister Eleanor Popham and Brother Robert A. McCracken have announced their engagement. They are of the Belfast Branch.

Halliday - Botfield. Sister Gillian S. Halliday of the Stroud Branch, Bristol District, and Brother Richard D. Botfield of the South London Branch, London District, announced their engagement on New Year's Eve.

Adkin - Mount. On the 30th of December the engagement of Sister Lily Adkin, of the Newchapel Branch, and Brother Bernard G. Mount, of the St. Albans Branch, was announced.

Marriages

Aubrey - Babbidge. On December 31st Sister Iris Aubrey was married to Mr. John Babbidge. The wedding took place in Bourne-mouth.

Ellwood - Haertel. The marriage of Sister Francis Ellwood, of the South London Branch, and Brother Grant Haertel, in the American forces in Germany, took place on November 26th. The couple are now living in Germany.

Organ - Butler. On December 3rd the Cardiff Branch had their

first wedding. Sister Emily Organ was married to Michael Butler, President T. J. Jones officiating. It was a very beautiful ceremony.

Deaths

Makin. Elder John Henry Makin passed away on July 14th. A funeral service was held in Birmingham Chapel. Brother Makin was 75 years of age and a High Priest.

Ogden. Sister Ogden, 73, of the Northampton Branch, passed away on November 28th. Sister Ogden was an ever faithful member, and much respected by all.

Ordinations in the Priesthood To the Office of Deacon

James Andrew Clement, Jr., of the U.S. Forces, at Norwich, by Elder Vaughan Wixon, December 18th.

Stanley Worth, of Darlington, by President A. P. Hancock, August 21st.

Geoffrey Carbert, of Darlington, by President Murray McInnes, August 21st.

John Chapman, of Birmingham, by Brother Philip Green, November 20th.

Ernest David Morris, of Birmingham, by President John Kitsell, December 11th.

To the Office of Teacher

Derek Dixon, of Birmingham, by Brother Donald Jeavons, November 20th.

Philip Dixon, of Birmingham, by Brother Philip Green, November 20th.

To the Office of Priest

James Such, of Birmingham, by Brother Leslie Megeny, November 20th.

**ATTENTION, "STAR" REPORTERS. NEWS MUST BE IN BY
MARCH 5th FOR APRIL ISSUE**

Decline of Christianity

Aim: Christianity has declined in the nations, but the Lord has promised, that if we keep His commandments, He will "fight our battles" and protect this nation and will fortify it against all nations.

Reason for Anger

WHY is the Lord angry? Why are all these things coming upon the world? President Young said in this article that I read and the Lord says in the revelations I have read to you, it is because they have turned away from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because they have rebelled against God, and because they have refused to hear the testimony of those who have been sent to preach the Gospel to them. That is why. They have rejected the message. The nations are full of iniquity. I have read these things. I have something here that I wish to read to you. I publish this in this book, "The Progress of Man", by permission, and this is part of a talk that was made to the students of the Agricultural College by their President, Elmer G. Peterson. He went to Europe and visited all these countries in 1936; and when he came home, he spoke to that student body. What he said is gospel truth. I asked him if I could publish it, and he said I could, so here it is:

"In any case, two or three hundred million people are now living under dictators, dictators with scientific weapons at their disposal of such destructiveness that civilisation conceivably could be wiped out if they are ever loosed, and under a political organisation which

gives men no choice. It is impossible for anyone who has not seen it to sense fully the degree to which democracy and human liberty have been crushed on the continent of Europe. The Scandinavian countries, Czechoslovakia and a few other small areas are glorious exceptions.

Decline of Christianity

"May I say one other thing? There is a definite correlation between the decline of freedom and democracy and the decline of Christianity in these countries. There is not one among us pharisaical enough to condemn these people struggling not only to maintain that standard of living which our civilisation presumes as its objective but struggling to live, for the very bread with which to feed themselves and their children. They are caught by a great and evil matrix which binds them to forms and usages which in many cases must express the opposite of their heart's desires.

"In the centres of learning and power the idea of a personal God, as revealed to us in the New Testament, and to whom every individual and every nation is accountable, has almost if not entirely disappeared. Philosophy, probably I should say not philosophy which the Greeks so glorified, but rather

half-baked philosophers, and our incomplete interpretation of a developing science, have been factors in this uprooting. In the quest for wealth and power rulers perforce must deny the validity of a doctrine which would invalidate them if their followers ever accepted it. In any case and whatever the causes, in critical and important places any real sense of individual relationship to a Supreme Being has disappeared and these nations no longer believe that they are accountable to this Just Judge for their acts. Christendom, so called, has to a marked degree everywhere in it become Godless. This, I believe, is the root of the world's ills. Christianity, under the benign influence of which our civilisation has developed, is now denied by the very nations it made great and powerful. This is treason, probably the most serious treason ever committed upon earth. And who can believe that we can escape the penalty for such an act."

—"The Progress of Man",
pp. 411-412.

The Right Key

He put his finger upon the right key to the whole situation—Rejection of the Gospel; Rejection of Jesus Christ; and when you reject the Gospel, when you reject the Author of our salvation, what have you to rely on? Why, nothing, but the devil's plan; and what is the devil's plan? To force men, to take away from them their agency, to compel them to do the bidding of somebody else, whether they like it or not, and that is the feeling that has spread over the world. Naturally, the Lord says the time was near at hand, and He said that over 100 years ago—111 years ago—the time was near at hand, and that

time has now come, when the devil has power over his own dominion. Well, if the devil has power over his own dominion, what is he teaching? Despotism, and destruction of agency. That is what he is doing; and if we will not keep the commandments of God, that is what we are coming to.

If we turn away from these principles of eternal truth, principles established by the fathers of our country as they were inspired to lay down these laws and give us this Constitution under direction of our Father in Heaven, if you please, if we turn away from that and if we trample those sacred things under our feet—some have been trying to do it—then we, too, will be subject to the devil's plan. It will come gradually. We hear a great deal about the thought that we are fighting now for liberty, the liberty of the people, the liberty of the nations. I hope so; but if we want to insure the liberty of the people, then we must turn back again to Jesus Christ, who is the God of this land. I say, "we". I mean the people of the United States, the people of this continent. We cannot afford to forsake the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ. If we do, we lose our strength. The Lord has promised to protect this nation, this whole continent; this whole hemisphere. He would fortify it against all other nations. He would fight our battles, on one condition, and that is that we would keep His commandments.

Scores Corruption

When I see, as I have, our young men who are from all parts of this country, going into the forces of our country, drunken, filled with liquor, filled with tobacco, carous-

ing, corrupt in their lives and there is nothing much being done about it, I am pained. I have seen it. I have been out in some of these camps. I have been among these young fellows. I have seen the condition; and if we are going to permit that sort of thing, it is just going to be too bad for us, and it is time those at the head were taking a stand. They have a right to take a stand, and they are the ones who should take a stand to prohibit that sort of thing.

When a man rises up in the Senate of the United States and presents a bill to remove from our armies liquor and the temptations that are before them, he is ridiculed; and when we write to the men who represent us in Congress and ask them to stand for that, what answer do we get back? There are men sitting here in this congregation who have the answers that these men have made, and there is no assurance at all that they would stand for the thing that is right.

Cites Danger

Now, there is our danger. We must not forsake God. If we are not on His side, you may be sure He is not going to be on our side. He will leave us to ourselves.

Now, these calamities are here. They are upon us. The whole world is in commotion.

I have had to leave unsaid about two-thirds of what I have prepared to say, but next week, which will be the concluding talk, I am going to turn to these Scriptures and show you what the old prophets have said in regard to our day. I have told you now what the Lord said and what the prophets of our own own day have said. I have shown you the fulfillment of the prediction by President Wilford Woodruff, that the angels are sent forth to reap the earth. They are on that mission. This I have presented to you tonight, and we will get the other things next time.

The Lord bless you, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

TRANSFERS :

	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Date Effective</i>
Elder Richard T. Baker	Liverpool	Leeds	January 5th, 1956
Elder Wil'ard J. Ballantyne	Hull	Scotland	January 5th, 1956
Elder Lavo'ir A. Banks	Sheffield	London	January 5th, 1956
Elder Finley H. Bayles	Norwich	Newcastle	January 5th, 1956
Elder Kenneth I. Craythorn	London	Sheffield	January 5th, 1956
Elder William K. Daines	Scotland	Newcastle	January 5th, 1956
Elder Garry W. Hannig	Manchester	Ireland	January 5th, 1956
Elder Richard A. Henderson	Newcastle	Scotland	January 5th, 1956
Elder Larry Kay Juchau	Newcastle	Norwich	January 5th, 1956
Elder Sherman James Lindhardt	Liverpool	Hull	January 5th, 1956
Elder Douglas T. Snarr	Ireland	Manchester	January 5th, 1956
Elder David W. Wright	Nottingham	Liverpool	January 5th, 1956
Sister LuDene Brown	Scotland	London	January 7th, 1956
Sister Joyce Lundgreen	London Office	Birmingham	January 7th, 1956
Sister Sapora T. Thaxton	London Office	Ireland	January 7th, 1956
Sister Anna Belle Sanders	Norwich	Scotland	January 7th, 1956
Sister Sheila Thomson	London	Norwich	January 7th, 1956
Sister Arshalous T. Thompson	Norwich	Ireland	January 7th, 1956
Sister Mary Walker	Birmingham	Norwich	January 7th, 1956

APPOINTMENTS :

Sister Patty Lou Reed	Mission Accountant	January 7th, 1956
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**ELDER
KENNETH STIRLAND**

**SISTER
SUSIE MASSEY**

**SISTER
BARBARA WALDROM**

**ELDER
ROBERT BERRETT**

RELEASES :

January 1st, 1956
Elder Kenneth Stirland

From
Tremonton, Utah

Served In
Sheffield, Wales, London Office and
Liverpool Districts

January 6th, 1956
Sister Susie Massey

Salt Lake City, Utah

Wales, Nottingham, Birmingham and
Sheffield Districts

January 22nd, 1956
Sister Barbara Waldrom

Leicester,
Leicestershire, England

Sheffield District

January 25th, 1956
Elder Robert Dean Berrett
Elder Robert Wilson Hayes

Salt Lake City, Utah
Bountiful, Utah

Manchester and Bristol Districts
Wales, Manchester and London
Districts

BAPTISMS :

Birmingham District
Joseph Norman Prestidge of Coventry-Rugby
Iris May Prestidge of Coventry-Rugby

Newcastle District
Catherine Stubbs of Darlington
Andrew Penman Hancock Jr. of
Newcastle
Maureen Joan Key of Newcastle
Patricia Selkirk of Newcastle
Margaret Selkirk of Newcastle
Norma Dixon of Sunderland

Bristol District
Dennis James Anderson of Bournemouth
Eugenie Margaret Hart Anderson of
Bournemouth
Dorothy Lavinia Palmer of Weston-super-
Mare
Anthony Blake of Plymouth

Norwich District
Keith Andrews of Colchester
Morris Neal Sargent of Norwich
Elsie Violet Cooper of Norwich

Hull District
Andrew Sharp of Grimsby
Janet Sharp of Grimsby
Violet Robinson Sharp of Grimsby
Thomas Roger Sharp of Grimsby
Denise Lancaster of Scarborough
Elizabeth Jane Wardle of Scarborough
Patricia Ann Coyne of Scarborough
Jean Dawson MacDonald Junior of York
Albert Brown Wardle of Scarborough

Nottingham District
David Alexander Paton of Eastwood
John William Walwyn of Leicester
Doris Walwyn of Leicester
Michael John Pickering of Loughborough
Patricia Ann Pickering of Loughborough
Lillian Mary Pickering of Loughborough
Jack William Creaser of Loughborough
Jill Marion Creaser of Loughborough
Sandra Christine Ann Creaser of
Loughborough
Barbara Creaser of Loughborough
Gertude Clare Joyce Chaplain of
Nottingham
Yvonne Marion Pickering of Loughborough

Irish District
Jemima Brown of Belfast
Agnes McComish of Belfast
Ethelbert Pa.ndovoine of Belfast
Eileen Frances Amos of Belfast
George Tate Blair of Belfast
Catherine Elizabeth Campbell of Belfast

Leeds District
Carol Ann Green of Bradford
Paul Whitehead of Bradford
John Garner of Dewsbury
Dennis Livesey of Huddersfield
Helen Livesey of Huddersfield
Mary Brook of Huddersfield

Sheffield District
Ephriam Wright of Barnsley

Manchester District
George Lomas of Bury
David Nowell Lomas of Bury
James Booth of Bury

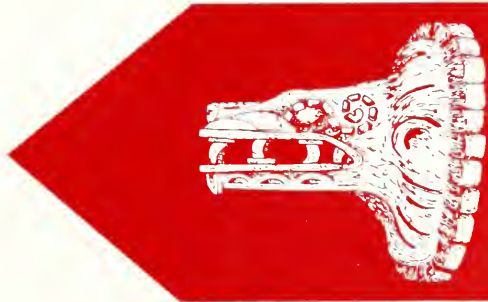
Scottish District
Thomas Park of Airdrie
Margaret Grace S. Herbertson of
Glasgow
John Duncanson of Glasgow
Elizabeth Marshall Lettuce of Glasgow
Jeanie Laird Gray of Glasgow
Janet Hamilton McInally of Glasgow
Jane Henderson Muirhead of Glasgow
Lilian Russell Dickson Tait of Edinburgh

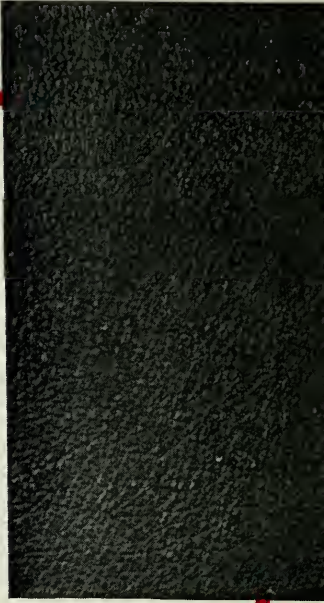
One of the perplexing problems of modern science is determining the origin of the mighty Indian civilisations of Mexico, Central and South America. The archæological evidences point to the fact that these pagan peoples at one time in their history had a knowledge of ancient Israel, its customs and habits. Semetic culture echoes from the Mayan ruins in Central America, and science puzzles why.

But man has the answer today, and it lies in the pages of *The Book of Mormon*. To the honest in heart, the challenge is given to investigate, and know the truth.

“And after I had made these plates by way of commandment, I, Nephi, received a commandment that the ministry and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them, should be written upon these plates; and that the things which were written should be kept for the instruction of my people, who should possess the land, and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord.”

1 Nephi 19:3





*Wherefore murmer ye, because that
ye shall receive more of my word?
Know ye not that the testimony of
two nations is a witness unto you
that I am God, that I remember
one nation like unto another?
Wherefore, I speak the same words
unto one nation like unto another.
And when the two nations shall run
together the testimony of the two
nations shall run together also.*

2 Nephi 29:8